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Subject: Law of Hereditary Influence.

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A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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LAW OF HEREDITARY INFLUENCE.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—Exod. xxxiv. 7.

This is the abrupt close of perhaps the most remarkable passage in the whole Scripture. We are accustomed to think that the knowledge of God's character, like all other human knowledges, has been subject to an unfolding process; that it dawned little by little upon the world; that at first God was taught as the Source of power, the Author of all phenomena; that he was monarchic and governmental; and that in the amelioration of manners, and in the growth of civility and of affection, there was a preparation made to teach larger and more interior views of God; namely, what may be called the domesticity of the divine nature—his private and personal sympathies and affections.

And so, when we have arranged this theory of the gradual opening of the divine character upon the world according to the most approved modern notions of science, suddenly there blazes up on the far horizon of time the most perfect description of God that yet exists; and not only the most perfect, but the earliest. There it stands, the fullest and sweetest and most perfect description of divine mercy and love. Listen to this description, which was given thousands of years ago:

"The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

And then, abruptly, we fall on that passage which we have selected for our text—the doctrine of hereditary influence:

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

As it surprises us to find antedating our philosophy this moral character of God, so one may be surprised, also, to see, long before the era of science, this clear disclosure of that great principle which pervades human life, and which modern science is now beginning to formulate, and to teach as a principle—the transmission of hereditary influences, good and bad.

Sunday Evening, May 1, 1870. Lesson: Psa. XXVII. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 249, 906, 1263.

Some have thought that men existed before they lived in this world. It is a pleasing dream. It can claim to be nothing more than that. But admitting it to be so, they certainly were not consulted as respects their introduction into this life. It is not given to any of us to say when, nor where, nor of whom, we shall be born, nor what circumstances shall surround us. We are born into life finding nature already completed. Her works are infrangible, inevitable. We are placed within the circuit of a system the minutest part of which has been determined. And we are not at liberty to overleap that circuit. Neither can we creep under it, nor in any way turn aside from it. We are born into a world where the whole economy of things was arranged before we came hither; and we are obliged to take things as we find them. And the circuit within which we have any power to form or change issues is very narrow. There is a circuit of liberty; but it is a very narrow circuit, within wide bounds of arbitrary and absolute enforcement.

Among the things which we find fixed inevitably in this life, is the circumstance, the necessity, of exerting influence and receiving influence. There is no evidence that this economy pervades the vegetable world. We see no proof that one plant acts directly upon others. It is true that a tree affects the things that grow near it; but the tree does not act directly on those things. It prevents a certain influence from being exerted upon them by interposing itself between the sun and them. But men cannot stand alone in juxtaposition without more than simply affecting each other in this way. Men are made curiously, marvelously, both to exert and to receive influence; and it is difficult to to determine which tendency is the strongest. They are equipollent, probably. In some, perhaps, they may not be exactly balanced; but the average is about the same.

The mind of man is unlike the attributes of the lower and nascent races. The nature of the human mind is such that a man must take on influence from all that are around about him, and must give out influence upon all that are around about him. We have no choice in the matter. Except by self-immuring, or absolute seclusion, we cannot break the force of this law. We do not alone influence men when we purpose to do it. When we bring the enginery of thought and emotion to bear, and determine voluntarily to produce effects upon men, then, to be sure, we influence them; but more often we influence them when we do not think of it even. We cannot help ourselves.

It is impossible for a stove in an apartment, being filled with fuel, and the fuel being set on fire, to retain its heat. It has to throw it out. And it is impossible for a man, living under the stimulus of power and emotion, to retain his influence. He must throw it out upon men that are round about him.

We are born into a life where we cannot determine the nature of the influences which we exert. We can repress some, modify others, and develop still others; but we cannot determine the effect, nor change it. A certain influence we must exert one upon another.

First, we will mention *voluntary* influence, or the capacity which we have gained of influencing our fellow men by bringing power, or the causes of power, to bear upon them on purpose. This is the more familiar form of influence; and it needs, therefore, the less exposition. It is the foundation of all instruction. The parent influences the child on purpose. The teacher purposely influences all the minds that are brought under his care. Friends influence friends. We draw men to our way of thinking, and to our way of acting. We persuade; we dissuade; we urge; we enforce our urgency; and in a thousand ways we voluntarily draw men to and fro. This is the secret of poetry; it is the secret of oratory; it is the secret of power in life, man with man.

How wide the scope, how vast the sum of it is, in any man's individual life, no one can tell. All the things that you do to-day or to-morrow, all the things from which your motives spring—the basilar influences, the intermediate influences, the coronal or moral influences, the various elements that you develop directly in men—these things, going on in an endless series, through forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty years—who can estimate them? Who can form a conception of all the power that one thus exerts through so long a period of time? Who can measure it? Who can gather up in any computation the volume of light and heat that has been cast out from the solar orb through centuries? Who can tell what the stars have emitted of their own or reflected light? Who can form any idea of the amount of light and heat which the sun has given forth?

Now, take that more fugitive and less computable element, the direct influence which the positive exertion of thought, and emotion, and sentiment and passion, has produced upon our fellow men.

Then, besides all this, besides what we do on purpose, besides what we set out to do, there is the other element of unconscious influence which men exert—that which our nature throws out without our volition. For I hold that it is with us as it is with the sun. I do not suppose that the sun ever thinks of raising the thermometer; but it does raise it. Wherever the sun shines warmly, the mercury goes up, although the sun and the instrument are both unconscious. And we are incessantly emitting influences, good, bad or negative. We are perpetually, by the force of life, throwing out from ourselves imperceptible influences. And yet, the sum of these influences is of the utmost weight and importance in life.

A single word spoken, you know not what it falls upon. You know not on what soul it rests. In some moods, words fall off from us, and are of no account. But there are other moods in which a word of hope, a word of cheer, a word of sympathy, is as balm. It changes the sequence of thought, and the whole order and direction of the mind. A single word is often like a switch on a railroad, which, although it is a point almost too fine to be seen, yet is sufficient, when turned, to change the course of the train from one track to another, and perhaps from one road to another. Single words have often switched men off from bad courses, or off from good ones, as the case may be. Many and many a man, by a simple action which was born of virtue, and which passed by him unconsciously, has determined the fate of those who were looking up to him. A good man stands in the community as a tree stands on a lawn in summer, full of blossoms, of which it is unconscious, but which every one who goes past the lawn sees, and blesses the tree for. The sweet odor of the apple-tree is wafted in every direction, and myriads are participators of its life and effloresence, or of its after-fruit. And so a great nature stands forth in bud, and in blossom, and in after maturation, and there go out from him in every direction influences for instruction, confirmation, inspiration. A thousand things which the man never thought to do, he does. More are the things which you do, not meaning to do them, than are the things which you do, intending to do them.

It is the simple weight of being, it is the inevitable radiation of thought and emotion, which produces a disturbance in other men's minds, and in the processes of their thought. A single example, silent, unspeaking by vocalization, but characterized by purity, by simplicity, crystalline and heavenly, has sweetened whole neighborhoods. And as the wax-taper burns in the temple by night, unconscious both of its own substance and of the light which it emits, so there be many persons who, in their humility, count themselves to be doing nothing in life, but who are diffusing the divinest influences in every direction. Fidelity, disinterestedness in love, pure peacefulness, love of God, and faith in invisible things, cannot exist in a man without having their effect upon his fellow men. It is impossible that one should stand up in the midst of a community and simply be good, and not diffuse the influence of that goodness on every side.

And the reach is incalculable. I have heard persons say that they seemed to themselves to be doing nothing in life. No man and no woman that is faithfully following the Lord Jesus Christ can be said to be doing nothing. It is not the eloquent tongue that speaks the most. It is not the heroic action which men sound forth that is, after all, the most potential in the affairs of men. The symmetrical example of holy

souls has a voice which sounds out further, and reaches forth a hand that is felt further, than more positive and more declarative influences.

That which is true of goodness is true, also, of evil. Men who are under the influence of the malign passions are sowing the seeds of these passions. Sparks fly out from them as from the chimney of a forge. Men there are who go driving through life under the stimulus of intense wicked feelings, as trains drive through the night, sending out a stream of sparks behind them which, lighting upon any inflammable thing along the road, leave a conflagration in the rear. The train thunders on; but the fire stays behind, to burn whatever is within its reach. Thousands and thousands of men there are who never intended to destroy anybody, but who have murdered scores and hundreds of men. Thousands and thousands there are who never meant to make anybody unhappy, but who have waked the fires of hell in many and many a heart. There are thousands and thousands of men who, if you should question them, would lift up their hand before God, and say, "I have never smitten my brother; I have never destroyed a soul;" and yet, in the last great day it will appear that these men, by their unconscious influence, have set on fire trains of thought and imagination in men which in the end utterly destroyed them.

Who, having the small-pox, or the plague, and making a journey withal, having gone, with the pest upon him, through car after car, through village after village, and along the whole line of the road, can, at the end of the route, sit down and count up what he has done? How does he know what germs of that dreadful disease he has sown wherever he has been? How does he know how those germs will fester here and there? And how does he know what widening circles of contagion, having their origin with him, will sweep through the country, carrying death and destruction every whither?

And where a man's heart is set on fire of hell, and he has spread his baleful influence unconsciously among the mercurial, the imaginative, the over-sensitive, and the receptive natures that are around about him, who can measure how much mischief he has done?

Born with divine intelligence, born with moral sentiments that ally them to God, born with instincts that should have led them upward, how many men have gone through life, distributing only those influences that animalize life, lower the tone of conscience, take away sensibility, destroy faith in goodness, and, finding men around about them all ready, like the open furrow, for seeds of immortality, sow therein the seeds of utter destruction! How many men there are that, without attempting it purposely, have slain many souls with dishonesty! How many there are that never conjured with men's truth, and yet left them liars! How many there are that never set out to make

infidels of men, and yet by their prosperity in awful courses have broken the faith of thousands and thousands in the existence of a principle of justice in this world, or in the belief that there is a divine moral government which discriminates between right and wrong!

It is not needful that a man should set out to do wrong. If you are bad, you cannot help doing wrong. And if you are good, you cannot help spreading goodness. A man will distribute that which is the inherent quality of his character. He that is clothed with virtue, or filled with the inspirations of a true piety—let him stand where he may, and he shines, and scatters around him the light of God. And he that is filled with wickedness—let him go where he may, and behind him, however many precautions he may take, that wickedness will spread. It is the inherent necessity of wickedness to breed wickedness and distribute it.

A man is responsible, not only for what he does on purpose, but for what he unconsciously does. And the load of responsibility grows as you take in these widening circles. More than this, the greater the nature, and the more ample the endowment, the more influence does a man exert both for good and for evil—reversing, precisely, the vagrant and corrupt impression of men, that a great nature is to have great liberty.

The moral tone of our literature in this respect is exceedingly bad. There is almost a maxim that genius has a right to be lawless as to its method of doing right things. But genius has no right to be lawless as to whether the things that it does shall be right or wrong. It may change language if it please; it may fashion art as it chooses; but as between virtue and vice, as between self-indulgence and temperance, as between purity and sensuality, piety and bestiality, genius has no rights. Every man is responsible for duty; and duty, and responsibility for it, augment in the proportion of being. If a man has but one talent, but one talent is required of him; but if he has ten talents, then ten talents are required of him. And so, if a man have wit and genius and knowledge, instead of having a right to be lewd and intemperate and full of all license of tongue, he, above all others, is bound to be strict, and sweet, and true, and pure. The greatest offenders that have ever lived on the face of the earth, have not been cruel robbers, vulgar thieves, or men wallowing in bestiality. The children of light, the fallen stars of genius—these are the men on whom God will lay the line, and whom he will measure with terrible severity.

It is not a small thing for a man to be organized and sent into this world a power-breeder. When a man has great fertility of thought and great play of imagination, it is not for him, like Swinburne, to set on fire all the low and base passions of human nature, and leave on

record a literature that Venus would blush to read. It is not a small thing for a man endowed with the gift of song to clothe the appetites in glowing stanzas that make drunkenness almost celestial and divine. It is abominable that persons on whom God has showered the richest blessings of nature, should wreathe the beast that is in men with flowers and with laurels, and so win those who are already over-addicted to things low and sensuous by still more potent fascinations and charms and immoralities. Until within a comparatively recent period the sons of genius have wrought for Satan, and not for God.

But one step further. Our influence is not merely voluntary, or involuntary and unconscious, but it becomes complex, because it is compounded with the lives and the added influence of others. We are social. We come into relations with men. Our freedom touches theirs. We inspire them. But we do not change their nature. We, as it were, sow germs in their soil. These germs go on and become forces in their hands. So that that which we do to single ones, they propagate. We lose sight of the fulness and the scope of the things that we do, and they go on in widening circles through society. Long have we forgotten, if we ever knew them, things that we set in motion, the influence of which was good or bad, but the outwork of which we shall yet know.

When, under a divine inspiration second only to that of the sweet singer of Israel, Isaac Watts wrote his hymns, do you suppose he formed the remotest estimate of how those hymns, setting like an organist at the keys of the human soul, would go on playing the divinist melodies out of holy hearts through thousands and thousands of years? When the rapt and celestial Charles Wesley wrote those hymns of inspiration of his, and when the melancholy Cowper wrote his sweet hymns, do you suppose they dreamed how those soldiers of light, armed in full panoply go marching on, and slaying doubt and unbelief, and making good battle for Christ to the end of time? And when those masters of iniquity, the poets that have sung for Belial's lewd pleasure, wrote the vile things that, in euphony, and with all the grace and movement of music, go on chanting their bad errands and inspirations, do you suppose they dreamed of the causes they were setting in operation?

Books preserve the good and the bad. The thoughts which men embalm in literature live on long and long after their bones have crumbled back to dust again. And who can measure the power and the might of the good that a man can do? Or, who can measure the power and the might of the bad that a man can do? I would rather slay with my red hand, in rage, a thousand men, and murder them, expiating my crime (or rather, receiving an honorable acquittal at the

hands of the courts, and be praised by the whole community for being a murderer!) than to pollute any of the great sentiments of humanity with a work of genius so beauteous that it could not die, but would go on corrupting and corrupting generations of men, and so be the murderer of men's consciences and spiritual natures.

And yet, how little is this accounted of! How are men still putting laurels on satanic principles! How still are men looked up to, and their influence descanted on, whose whole power is to wake up the devil that is in men! How are these men that walk in places of honor and places of trust still unscorned and unslain! How do men whose whole work in society is to sour life, to wake up malignant passions, to stab men with jealousies, to perpetuate feuds, to create new quarrels, and to drag out whatever there is verminous and mischievous and belluine in human nature, still retain enough respectability to give currency to the evil that they do—doing it deftly, and seeking, by skill, and literature, and science, and genius itself, to make the devil deified!

Can any man be more a culprit, can any man be more surely under the impending wrath of God, that shall by-and-by fall heavily and rest forever, than such an one? Oh! how miserable will be the best estate of such men, though their names be bruited about, and though they walk in places of power!

But men's influence is not limited to their voluntary action, nor to the complex social relations which they sustain, and by which their influence is propagated indirectly. In some respects men hold in their hands the history of the future. The very solemn declaration of our text—"Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation"—this is the mystery of ages. If it were but on the one side; if men, having the power of benificence, had the power to perpetuate it, we should admire that; but if it is a fact that men have the power of transmitting corruption, and so of influencing after times, who can fail to marvel at that? If that is a law, men may well stand appalled in the presence of such results as must fall out under it. And it is a law; it is a fact.

Men are empowered to transmit bodily ailments on the one hand; and, on the other hand, they are empowered to transmit bodily strength, symmetry and power. I do not believe in the conversion of the world simply by the preaching of the Gospel—that is to say, by the mere influence of moral truth. We must learn this great hereditary law; and we must include in our purposes of benevolonce the wise selection, the perpetuity and the improvement of the race, by the observance of this great law of hereditary transmission. As long as men either know nothing or care nothing about this law; as long as they go on trans-

mitting, constantly, and haphazard, the traits, good or bad, that they have in them—so long it will require all the power of the preached Gospel to make up for the irregularities that fall out under the ignorance or neglect of natural law. We are perpetually bringing moral law to bear to correct evils that result from violations of natural law. And it is a solemn thing, that a man crippled by a life-long disease, of liver, or stomach, or brain, is left free to transmit to his children—four, six, eight of them—the same hereditary tendencies; and that they in their turn, spreading and multiplying, are left free to transmit those tendencies to their children; and that they again are left free to transmit them to the third and fourth generation, until some new strain of blood comes in to correct the old and corrupt tendencies. What a branching misery is within the reach of every man! And how does the physician, how does the physiologist, studying life as it is, see that this great law is perpetually developing itself, and shedding its fruits; and that men have the power, not simply of exerting influence by their mentality, but of transmiting causes, good or evil, by this hereditary law.

Men transmit not simply their constitutional peculiarities, but their acquired qualities. It is so in the animal kingdom, and still more forcefully so in the human race. Animals that have been instructed and made intelligent by drill, will have a posterity that will take on instruction much more facilely than they did. This tendency will not increase beyond certain limits, and these limits are comparatively narrow; but it is a tendency that is observed. We certainly see it in society.

Savage natures cannot take on civilization, until, by a process of repetition, the hereditary law has had time to work out. One generation moderately civilized, leaves another one that takes on civilization faster; and that one leaves another that takes on civilization still faster; and so on, until a generation is reached that is thorough-bred, and facile to take on education.

The children of educated parents are, generally speaking, easily educated. The children of dull and uneducated parents are not facile of education. They are slow to learn, and slow to retain or use what they learn.

Not only is this so in respect to intelligence, but it is so with regard to goodness. There seem to be exceptional laws; but I think they are scarcely to be explained. Men think that the children of the good are seldom as good as their parents, and that the children of the great are seldom as great. That depends upon *their* parents again. Any faculty in the parent that is used, tends to reproduce itself in the posterity, if it be a passion; or tends to exhaust itself if it be a sentiment, and does not reappear in the posterity.

So that excessively nervous conscientious persons are very likely to have children that are without conscience. They use up all the conscience they have in themselves, they burn it out, so that there is none to transmit. It is the lower animal nature that seems to have a superfluity of power by which passions, set on fire, can transmit themselves. But the higher nature, exiguous, as it were, lacking stimulous and power, easily becomes exhausted, and is not easily transmissible.

And so it is with religious or spiritual-minded persons. If they become excessively spiritual-minded, or if they are over-educated religiously, then the moral side of their nature is exhausted, and they have no capacity to transmit the higher qualities, and their children come out with a dent where they had a prominence.

But the great law stands, nevertheless, that persons living with a wise regard to the law that touches every part of their nature—living virtuously and Christianly—tend to transmit virtuous inclinations, and tend to transmit a susceptibility that with more ease becomes truly Christian in their posterity. The children of intelligent and Christian parents are more likely to become Christians than the children of ignorant and wicked parents.

Men transmit, likewise, their acquired tendencies of thought. Lying men tend to have lying children. Dishonest men tend to have dishonest children. Thieves tend to breed thieves; murderers, murderers; drunkards, drunkards; insane men, insanity. These great facts are indisputable. They may not often be heard in the sanctuary; though it would be wiser if they were heard there oftener.

Not to follow the line of illustration further, I remark, first, that the power of a good life, both directly and indirectly or remotely, is, luckily, incalculable. One of the most potential motives of true holiness is the unconscious benefit which it distributes on every side—the far-reaching transmission of an eminent moral nature—the blessing that comes down, according to the word of God, from *the fathers upon the children, to the third and the fourth generation.*

There have been notable names in our own American history of men of holiness, and men of prayer, who died generations back, and whose posterity are carrying down with them to this day precisely the same traits that they possessed. From men and households that landed in the earliest days in the colonies, there has come down an unbroken succession of just such dispositions and tendencies. And every man that is laying the foundations of true manhood in himself; every man that is building himself up spiritually and Christianly—every such man, besides what he reaps himself, besides the bounty and benefit which his own household receives, besides the remote and direct influences which he will distribute all the way down through life, has the

promise and moral certainty of transmitting those same qualities which are in him, to unborn generations, so that when he is dead his influence will still walk and speak and transmit itself with growing power and in multiplying circles, to remote periods—*to the third and the fourth generation.*

Therefore, the sweetness and the blessedness which there is in the Christian life is not measurable by any of the ordinary standards. It is susceptible of an illustration far transcending any that has ever been given of it.

The malignity of sin is a terrible malignity, as it is revealed by this great law of the transmission of influence to posterity, either directly and voluntarily, or indirectly and unconsciously. There are multitudes of men that are careless of themselves. They are said to be their own worst enemies. They are men that are free and easy; that squander their money; that pervert their disposition; that corrupt the sources of taste and sensibility; that degrade their persons; that utterly ignore holiness of body; and that live all the way through life kind, it may be, but kind because they happen to be good-natured. And because they are good-natured and genial, people say of them, "They are clever fellows; they are kind men; they do no harm; at any rate they are their own worst enemies."

Now, a man that is spending his whole life to destroy himself, cannot stop with himself. No man ever destroyed himself alone, no man ever perverted the sources of his life in this way without at the same time influencing more than he knew or dreamed of. And the better fellow he is, the more likely is he to exert an influence.

More than that, it is not himself alone that is destroyed. The babe in the cradle is cursed. The daughter unborn is cursed. The heir and sequent children are cursed. And he scorns reproof, and will not be persuaded for his own sake, nor believe that he is in danger. And as one stands in a window when the street is crowded, and sows fire, casting it down not knowing whom it may smite, or between whose raiment and skin it may come, blistering and burning; so men stand transmitting influences, that go down from generation to generation corrupting and corrupting human life. It is a terrible thing for a man to be a vicious man, and the father of vicious men; to be a drunkard, and the father of drunkards; to be a culprit, and the father of culprits.

It is difficult to speak with sufficient delicacy of some shades of sin—the sin of lewdness, for instance; and unless one be courageous, he can scarcely perform this duty. Yet, no other duty is more necessary. The raging and destroying sin of such great cities as this; the sin that lurks and corrupts unseen, and whose wide devastation is so much shielded by a false delicacy, or by circumstances which make

men shrink as conscious that they lack skill delicately and knowledge wisely to touch the most immedicable of evils—this ought certainly not to be omitted from a category of transmissible sins. And men that sin against their own bodies and against their own purity, set in motion a line of causes which go on working down through generations. For their own guilty, selfish transgression, their own delusive and short-lived delirium of pleasure, they curse, with a bane and a blast immeasurable, generations yet to come.

It is the statement of many statisticians, that the tendencies to disease which are hereditarily transmissible, lower the tone of life in whole kingdoms in Europe. Whole armies become centres of transmitted influences that break out in various forms of disease, weakness and corruption. The constitution is lowered in tone; and life, in whole generations, in certain nations and societies, is corrupted. And all this mischief springs from that one source.

Let those who yet are safe, but who feel the whirl and temptation on the perilous edge, turn to the word of God, and read those terrific passages which occur in the Proverbs of Solomon. Let them, as they draw near to the house of death, shudder. In the chill, and in the dark shadow, let them gain wisdom and turn back, and learn that in the way of temperance, and in the way of chastity, and in the way of absolute virtue of thought and imagination, there is not only plenary happiness to them, but increasing influences for good, and sweet and divine blessings, rolling over and over to their posterity.

I will add but a single consideration more; and that is a caution and a warning to all those who are consciously bearing in themselves the seeds of transmissable disease. I think there is no crime and no misdeameanor, to those that are instructed, greater than that of forming marriage connections under such circumstances. There are men who are born to celibacy. There are men and women that ought to have sense of duty and heroism enough to say, "It is not wise for me to put in peril posterity. I am marked of God. I bear in myself transmissable qualities of mischief and evil. I will not shed them abroad. I will stand alone; and with me shall end one series of sorrows." But there are many who, for want of instruction, go on transmitting disease to future generations. And we see persons coming together both of whom are marked for early death, scrofulous and consumptive; and out blossoms the bright bud of promise and of hope; and ere long the minister is summoned to sympathize with them for one babe gone. A second comes and goes. The house is full of mourning. The third, alas! does not go, but lives on, with shattered constitution, with battered powers, and comes down into life carrying pain, pain, pain, and suffering in increasing waves, we know not how long nor how far.

It ought not to be a difficult thing for any Christianly bred man or woman to say, "It is not for me to be a sower of mischief in the future." There is many and many a man that should say, "By the help of God I will live and die single."

This is a thing which ministers ought to preach about. This is a thing which doctors ought to give their attention to. A doctor ought not to follow disease, but go ahead of it, as far as may be, and prevent it. He ought to teach the community the laws of health. And on no point is there more need of knowledge than on this.

It may be asked, "If we believe this to be the terrible constitution of things under which we are brought into this life, how can we help living in a state of perpetual anxiety? Must not a man watch the glance of his eye, the turn of his hand, his every step, even? Who can but ponder and brood upon the mischiefs which he may be unconsciously propagating? If besides what we mean to do, there is that other wide and fruitful influence which is unconscious, what peace and rest can there be to a man?"

If you have built your character on truth, justice, purity and piety, you need not be afraid. Just give yourself liberty. Do not ponder nor turn back. Do not fritter away your life by these unprofitable introversions and analytical processes of mind by which you attempt to detect the nature of your thoughts and feelings. Be sure of one thing—that a round, robust, moral manhood is safe. Trust it. Give it power. Let it run. No man that is doing wickedly ought to be other than anxious; but any man that is conscious that he has a judgment that is directed toward virtue, and piety, and God, and the welfare of his fellow men, need not be watching himself. The only man that is free, the only man that may do what he wants to, is the man who wants to do only what is good. The only man that is free from anxieties and forebodings, is the man who has the testimony of God in his soul that he is virtuous. He stands strong. He is full of joy now, and is full of anticipations of joy in days to come, and of certainties of joy when the sun and moon shall have passed away.

Blessed are they that have trusted in the Lord. They shall stand firmer than the mountains. Far above the disturbing influences that annoy the feeble, the weak, the guilty, and the fear-driven, they bathe their head in the upper sky. On them rests earliest, and latest, and longest, the benignest rays of the sun. Afar off they are seen in all colors and all forms of beauty. They shall be as Mount Zion, which God loveth.

Let these words sink deep into your hearts—especially into the hearts of those that are beginning life. Make right choices. Choose for God. Choose for virtue. Choose for kindness, for purity, and for

truth. Live for the highest things. Put your ambition not lower than the sun, but far above it. *Set your affections on things above, at the right hand of God, where Christ sitteth.* So live, and you shall rise to immortality. And then you shall behold how, through countless ages, the benefit and the blessing of your life still streams on, and how, being dead, you yet speak.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, this evening, our Father, rejoicing in thy mercy. Thou hast made our hearts glad all the day long. We have dwelt in thy presence all the day long. Thy smile has rested upon us. Not on the earth art thou now shining more graciously, bringing forth bud and flower, than upon our hearts. We rejoice that we are the children of God, and are beloved. We rejoice, though our sins are many and aggravated, that thou hast forgiven them, and wilt forgive. Thou art full of mercy. Thou art perpetual in thy tenderness. None can throw themselves away from thee except their hearts are set to do iniquity. We rejoice, O Lord our God, for all the hope which we have that when this short life is passed we shall reach a better land where temptations cease; where all influences descending from thee, unbroken we shall stand as the children of the Lord, in full power of holiness, and in all graciousness and beauty. We aspire to that land. From amidst tears, and cares, and sorrows, and sighing, we look to that land of rest where no storm blows, where no bolts descend, where are no winter blasts, and where no summer languisheth, but where there is rest for the weary, and perfectness to those that have been striving, where all are at home, and thou art the Father, and we are gathered as thy children, rejoicing in thee supremely, and in the reflected love of thy soul taught to love one another.

Help us, O Lord our God, while we make toward that blessed port across the stormy sea. Though delayed, baffled, driven out of our course, amidst perils be thou still our pilot. Guide us more safely, and bring us safely, every one of us, into that blessed harbor of God. Help us to be jealous of every evil in ourselves; to fear and to dread sin; to cast it out, and to purify ourselves wholly from it. And grant that we may know what is sinful. Thou Holy Spirit by which the heart shall be searched, search thou us. O God! try us, and see if there be any evil way in us. May we not be content with our own thought from day-to-day. May we open our souls to the secret nature of our God.

And we pray that thou wilt make us more and more sensitive to things that are wrong. Give more and more sensibility to our conscience—the discerning power in spiritual things. Grant that we may so live that by our experiences, by our life, by our aspiration, by our labor and sacrifice, one for another, we may interpret more of the divine nature. And so, learning more of thee, may we come back to human life with better knowledge of it, and thus gain both ways. And so we beseech of thee that we may go from glory to glory.

Bless, we beseech of thee, all the members of this congregation now assembled in thy divine presence. We pray that thou wilt cheer those that are in despondency, and give light to those that are in darkness and perplexity, and confirmation to all those that waver. Grant that those that are heavy-hearted may be comforted by the divine Consoler. Bless those that are bereaved, and sanctify their sorrows. Strengthen all that are burdened with care and trouble. And we pray that thou wilt grant that this whole people may to-night experience in thy presence such a blessing as shall make them feel their nearness to thee. And give them faith of thy government and of thy power upon men on earth.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, our God! that thou wilt remember any that are absent from us—all those whose hearts turn hitherward. And may thy truth and thy Spirit which makes us rich be their portion forever.

And now we commit ourselves to thy fatherly guidance. We need but thee. All the blessings of life are doubled and grow more fruitful in thy smile. Make our affections sweeter by loving us. Teach us divine love. Make our mercies and our sorrows more beneficent. And guide us safely through unto the last. And then, in dying to this world, may we begin

to live to the other, and beholding thee, and the glory of the moral state, may we rise to blessedness, and through infinite gradations, forever and forever, ascend in happiness.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt add thy blessing to the words spoken. May we understand the mystery of living. May we understand the mystery of thy providence in life. May we take from thy word the solution of many of those obscure and troublous questions which fall upon our thoughts. May we know that thou hast built us up like thyself. We are surrounded by vital influences on every side. Nor can we repress them. May we only seek so to purify our hearts, so to fill ourselves with gracious intents, so to come into sympathy with thy divine and spiritual nature, that all things which proceed from us shall be as of God.

Bless us, we pray thee, now, at the close of this Sabbath day. We thank thee for the day—for its morning, its noon, and its evening. Give us strength out of the bosom of this Sabbath to go down into the great week before us, to stand, to labor, and to suffer. Grant, we pray thee, that we may be men enduring hardship as good soldiers. And bring us finally, above all further suffering, beyond care and trouble, into thy heavenly kingdom, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

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Machines of all the approved makes are kept on hand, or furnished to order. They are sold at the Manufacturer's prices, with all their guarantees. Purchasers have here the advantage of seeing and testing all kinds together, and are thereby enabled to choose the Machine best adapted to their wants. They have also the privilege, if not suited in their first choice, of exchanging for any other kind. Full instructions are given gratuitously.

Machines are also Rented by the Day, Week, or Month, either with or without the privilege of purchasing, which gives an opportunity to test them thoroughly before buying.

We also deal in SECOND-HAND Machines—Buying, Selling, Exchanging, etc. Old Machines are Cleaned, Adjusted, and Modernized, and supplied with all the Tools, Fixtures and Attachments required in their use. Needles, Thread, Oil, Soap, etc., of the best quality, are kept constantly on hand, and sold at the lowest prices.

Operators, with or without Machines, are sent into Families; and Machine Stitching of all kinds is done at the EMPORIUM.

The establishment is complete in its arrangements, and possesses, under the new management, superior facilities for conducting the business. Every effort will be made to please those who favor us with their patronage.

In dealing with this establishment you have *this advantage:*

YOU CAN

EXCHANGE

FOR ANY OTHER MAKE

If your first choice should prove

NOT SATISFACTORY.

Machines sent to all parts of the country, and guaranteed to suit.

Full information as to prices, terms, etc., given to all who send address, stating the kind of work they wish to do.